

## **Lake Powell Branch Update – Wednesday, August 19, 2015**

### **EPA Sampling Activity:**

The Lake Powell Branch is working with the City of Page, Arizona, regarding the reduced need for periodic sampling of its drinking water intake in the foreseeable future and is coordinating with the ICP in Farmington to ensure that any subsequent sampling is consistent with that in other communities.

### **Lake Powell Sampling Expedition:**

The Lake Powell Branch has been refining plans for the upcoming USGS/NPS sampling expedition beginning at the end of this week.

Please note that EPA will not be integrating its sampling efforts into the USGS/NPS Mercury study, instead EPA is focusing its sampling efforts on San Juan River Gold King Mine related water and sediment quality influences on Lake Powell. EPA is participating in this expedition because it is an excellent opportunity to gain access to multiple sampling locations not readily available without long-term planning, and it provides EPA with access to boats and sediment/depth sampling equipment not readily available in normal circumstances. The Lake Powell Branch is close to completing its estimates in support of a Resource Request to the ICP.

### **San Juan River Water Quality Analysis and Announcements:**

The Utah DEQ Division of Water Quality has been providing its Gold King Release San Juan River Sampling data to EPA for our own analysis and review, and this data is being forwarded to Harry Allen, Ned Black and Gerry Hiatt.

The Lake Powell Branch hosted EPA Region 9 Technical Specialists, USGS, State of Arizona, State of Nevada, State of California in the daily conference call with the Utah Division of Water Quality, Department of Environmental Quality, for the purpose of collaborating on the interpretation of all available San Juan River response sampling data.

The Lake Powell Branch reached out to the USGS to request that they participate in interpretation of water and sediment data. Specifically, Katie Walton Day and other USGS representatives are providing specialized technical support in stream dynamics and sediment loading to EPA and Utah DWQ.

Lake Powell Branch is also participating in the

- Daily Utah DWQ - led “Agency Situation Update” Conference Call at 0700 PDT,
- The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs daily call at 0800 PDT, and

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- EPA Region 9 “Data to Message” internal calls.
- Response to requests for information and updates from the NPS personnel and PIO, their hotline, and Coconino County Representatives.

**Utah DWQ posted its data, and explanations of this data, this afternoon Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>... highlights follow:**

DEQ scientists believe that the highest levels of contaminants associated with the initial spill event have passed through the San Juan River in Utah. DEQ makes this statement based on several considerations:

- **At all monitoring locations, the dissolved concentrations of key dissolved metals have peaked and subsequently declined to concentrations reflective of historic data and that are below established environmental screening levels.**
- Total metals concentrations are highly variable and difficult to interpret with respect to this event.
- The monsoon storm events that occurred over the last couple of weeks are characteristic, but complicate interpretation of monitoring results, especially with respect to total metals.
- It is not currently possible to address all possible future states because the long-term effects of observed peaks remain unknown.
- The highest dissolved concentrations (peaks) of those key metals that are most strongly associated with the Gold King Mine reflect historic variability in the river.
- Over the long-term, any metals from the event that arrive in Utah will ultimately be deposited in Lake Powell. DEQ discusses its consideration of these long-term effects later in this analysis.

Utah DWQ data can be accessed at the following URL:

**<http://www.deq.utah.gov/Topics/Water/goldkingmine/index.htm>**

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### **EPA R9 Collaboration with Utah DWQ Director**

Thank you to Michael Montgomery, EPA Region 9 Water Division Assistant Director, for reaching out to the Director of the State of Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Mr. Walt Baker. It's our understanding that they discussed on-going agency collaboration on the gathering and interpretation of San Juan River sampling data and related Agency water quality monitoring activities.

### **Navajo Nation Water Deliveries:**

Thank you to Wilson Yee for working with the Lake Powell Branch **again today** in the ongoing State of Utah and San Juan County, Utah challenges with Navajo Nation Water Deliveries.

### **Lake Powell Branch Mapping Development and Support**

The Lake Powell Branch, with the support of R9 Area Command (Pete Guria), has been working with the R9 GIS team in development of a Geospatial Map with Lake Powell and San Juan River sampling points and related attribute data. Please see the attached PDF.